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The Municipal Reference Library As A Public Utility*

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of Chicago

Of all the remarkable achievements of the past century the development of American cities has been most pronounced. The rapidity of their growth, the increase in their wealth and population have had no parallel in modern times. One hundred years ago no city in the United States could lay claim to distinction as a metropolitan city with a population of 100,000 or more. Today twenty cities in the Union are in the latter class and their number is being increased by each census. These cities are the result of our tremendous economic development. Such development is intimately related to the vast quantitative and qualitative increase of our material resources, coupled with the unprecedented augmentation of our population since the Civil War and with the marvelous skill and aptness whereby our citizenship has been able to subdue the forces of nature and render them subject to its service.

The importance of the municipality in our national life is evident from the fact that today fully one-half of the population of the United States resides in urban communities. One-tenth of the total population of continental United States in the year 1910 could be found resident in our three largest cities, namely, New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia. In the magnitude of their undertakings, the grandeur of their public enterprises and the extent of their fiscal relations, these three cities exceed nearly all the states in the American Union.

The importance of the metropolitan city in this respect is best illustrated by the phenomenal growth of the city of Chicago during the seventy-nine years of its corporate existence.

Chicago on March 4, 1916, celebrated the seventy-ninth anniversary of its birth as a city, but it might more properly be called only thirty-five years of age, for within this

period of time it has added, in round numbers, approximately 2,000,000 people to its cosmopolitan family. Its population has been garnered from all parts of the habitable globe.

Chicago contains more Germans within its boundaries than any city in Germany excepting Berlin, Hamburg, Dresden and Leipzig; more Irish than any city in Ireland excepting Dublin and Belfast; and more Bohemians than any other city on the face of the globe excepting Prague; Chicago has more Norwegians within its area than any city in Norway excepting Christiania; more Swedes than any other city excepting Stockholm. It is the second largest Polish city and the seventh largest Italian city.

There are but eleven states in the American Union which have a larger population than Chicago. Nearly three-fourths of the entire population of the United States in 1790 can be found in the city of Chicago today.

The population of Chicago is nearly equal to the combined population of the states of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Rhode Island and South Dakota. Chicago has 3.2 times more people within its city limits than can be found in the whole state of Maine; 5.6 times the population of the state of New Hampshire; 6.8 times the population of Vermont and 4.2 times the population of Rhode Island.

Chicago's public school enrollment in June, 1915, was 315,512. This is more than there are people in each of the states of Arizona, Delaware, Nevada and Wyoming. The total number of public school teachers in Chicago exceeds the total number of teachers in each of twenty-one states. The appropriation made, by the Chicago city council for the year 1915 for municipal purposes, including the public schools and Library, amounted to \$90,951,706. This is greater by one-third than the cost of conducting the United States Government annually prior to the Civil War; the total ordinary disbursements of the

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United States Government in the year 1861 being, \$66,650,213. The entire national budget of the Kingdom of Sweden in 1914 was but \$73,362,239, that of Norway during the same year but \$41,513,700; that of the Netherlands \$91,823,078; while the total budget of the whole Turkish Empire did not exceed \$134,262,299.

The majority of the citizens in every municipality desire good government. They wish more ample protection against crime and disease and an amelioration and improvement in such conditions as affect their every day lives unfavorably. In order to accomplish these ends nearly every issue in municipal politics is one of greater efficiency in municipal administration. Professor Munro has well named it the "quest for efficiency." Our cities have come to realize the need of efficient and economical government and the necessity of facilitating the work of their public officials by supplying them with the means of obtaining data and information on municipal administration and legislation.

In the present day and age the common desire is for greater efficiency not only in affairs of government but in the industrial and commercial field as well. The essential condition and prerequisite of greater efficiency is knowledge. Individuals learn from experience. The common tendency of man is to learn from his own experiences and mistakes. It is the part of wisdom, however, to profit by the experiences of others. Society as well as individuals should learn from experience. This is especially desirable in our municipal life, where the astounding and unprecedented growth of our cities continually presents new problems of the greatest import to the future welfare and progress of their citizens. In order to assist public officials in the constructive work of the municipal government a special force should be placed at their disposal whereby they may be given an opportunity of availing themselves of the latest and best information on any feature of municipal activity and work in the world.

PURPOSE OF MUNICIPAL REFERENCE LIBRARY

Considered as an elementary proposition the purpose of the municipal reference library is to collect, arrange and make available for use information and material on matters relating to and touching upon municipal administration and legislation. It is a central depository, workshop laboratory and clearing house of facts and information serving as a haven to the perplexed alderman, department, bureau and division head as well as the citizen, where they may cast anchor after the heated discussions and confusing issues raised in the adjudication and arbitrament of problems affecting the public welfare by partisan and selfish private in-

terests. It should afford them a welcome pause and enable them to determine to what extent they may have been driven from a true course of action. After an examination of the impersonal and unbiased information and material on file in the municipal reference library it may be possible for them to confute sophistry and special pleading and effect a determination of pending municipal problems according to basic principles of public interest, right and justice.

It is necessary that a municipal reference library collect, classify, index and preserve all data obtainable relative to the operation and government of municipalities, such as reports, statistics, books, ordinances, magazines and clippings. Such material should be available to municipal officials and employees, citizens, civic or commercial organizations, representatives of the press, students, social workers and others who may desire information on any function or phase of the public work of the municipality. It is not sufficient that the library collect material and information but equally, if not more, important, is the fact that it should be put in ready, convenient form so that it may be consulted and used without difficulty and unnecessary trouble. The library should also be a favorite place of research for newspaper writers, editors and reporters for the purpose of consulting the material on file in its relation to the live municipal problems and issues of the day and as an aid in marshaling the facts needed in the preparation of a "story," to appear in the afternoon or morning newspaper.

Its aim is to lift up and support the arm of government with the strength of its resources and facilities. With its help no city need try experiments more or less dubious in their outcome and results. It should be able to lay before our public officials the experiences and results accomplished in other cities in solving or attempting to solve problems, however complex and difficult. It should give to official life and activity a broader vision by the study of the ordinances, experiences and achievements of other cities and their comparative value and applicability for local use in the light of differences in economic, physical and essentially local conditions and requirements. While much has been expected from our city officials, comparatively little has been done in placing at their disposal facilities for intelligent and efficient methods of legislation and administration. It has been said that we have preached the gospel of efficiency, but have done little toward providing the means of grace. Material desired as an aid to legislation under archaic conditions antedating the advent of the municipal reference library has been collected, and obtained by individual members of the city council, by clerks of committees, by department or bureau heads, or has been supplied by biased and interested parties.

Problems infinitely complex are placed before our city officials for solution, oftentimes involving nice distinctions of social policy and arrangement, with consequent differences in opinion and diversified interests. These problems and policies may determine the wise or wasteful expenditure of public funds with their consequent effect on the taxpayer's pocketbook in the form of higher or lower taxes. In order that measures and laws may not be initiated and enacted on the spur of the moment and with undue haste it is the part of wise municipal statesmanship to avail itself of the experiences of other cities and to be guided by their successes or failures. It is to aid public officials in arriving at just conclusions and sound principles of procedure on public administrative and legislative measures and policies by placing at their disposal and at their command all the available information and data obtainable on various subjects that the municipal reference library has its *raison d'être*.

The municipal reference library when established should supplant the wasteful, cumbersome policy often practiced by city officials of gathering information by means of personal investigating trips to other cities. The results obtained by this method are not commensurate with the cost, usually produce unsatisfactory results, meet with popular disapproval and are decidedly expensive. Even though justified by the results obtained it is a grave question if the data and information secured by reason of such personal trips of inspection could likewise not have been obtained from the books and pamphlets on the shelves of the municipal reference library.

The late William J. Gaynor, when mayor of New York City, made the statement that he would need the whole of his first term (four years) to learn how to be a competent mayor. His idea of arriving at such competency and efficiency was to travel from one city to another from time to time during his term of office and in this manner gain a knowledge of methods of municipal administration and legislation. While the motive, of the mayor was undoubtedly a good one, his method was decidedly crude.

The municipal reference library by reason of the well-digested material in its files and on its shelves showing the experiences and results achieved in other places, cities and countries on various topics should ever be helpful in aiding the official toward promoting and undertaking sound measures designed to mitigate and tender abortive any attempt toward experiments not sustained by facts. Measures sustained by comparative facts and experiences necessarily should result favorably, due allowance being made of course, for altered conditions. Comparative facts assembled by the municipal reference library should greatly aid in sound

social and government progress in its relation to established law and order.

The service and value of the municipal reference library should be measured in terms on the mass and amount of compact, concrete information it is able to supply to those for whose use it has been established. It should be an arsenal of mental ammunition for the city officials and employees who are engaged in bearing the brunt of the battle waged in behalf of better administrative and legislative methods in city government. It furnishes a constructive basis for greater efficiency in the conduct of municipal affairs.

FOR WHOM MAINTAINED

The municipal reference library had as its original purpose and object the gathering of information for the benefit of members of the city councils and boards of alderman of our cities. It was soon evident that the same information designed for the use of the legislative branch of the municipal government could be utilized by the administrative end as well. So today the library not only serves the city council, but also department heads, bureau and division chiefs and other city employees. Likewise its services are drafted into use by the numerous special investigating commissions appointed for various purposes during the year and by independent governing bodies within a city.

The municipal reference library not only is of intrinsic use and value to the city official but in Chicago at least, it is visited by representatives of civic and commercial associations, by students and teachers, social workers, by lawyers and politicians, newspaper men, writers and representatives of other manifold avenues and walks of life. Advanced and graduate students in political science, sociology and in municipal government find the municipal reference library a favorite field in which to work. It is often true that material found by the latter in the municipal reference library can not be found in any other library in the city.

The ability of the municipal reference library to help find information upon and to solve the many problems, intricate or otherwise, perplexing the employee of the city, whether of high or low station, is not only the surest test of the efficiency of the library itself but also of the value and reason for its existence in the scheme of effective municipal administration. The library can eliminate a vast amount of waste and duplication by cooperating closely with the various special investigating commissions referred to. Such commissions are appointed more and more frequently. In the city of Chicago there are now commissions on the liquor problem, on down town municipal improvements, on municipal flags, on taxation and on the reduction of gas rates.

Such commissions are urgently in need of material relating to their special fields of investigation and it should be the province of the library to accumulate all data and information obtainable on the respective subjects under investigations. Often the commissions have accumulated a mass of material during the course of their inquiries. At the end of a council year a change of administration perhaps causes a change of policy and the commissions are not re-appointed. The material collected by the defunct commissions is not turned over to any other municipal office nor preserved. Later on a new commission on the same subject is required to go over the entire field already traversed by the old commission, causing a needless delay in the investigation as well as a waste in time, effort and money. But if the material and data collected by the respective commissions is turned over to the municipal reference library, it will at all times be available for use to the employees of the city as well as to the general body of citizens. However, it is to be preferred that the municipal reference library gather and assemble in the first place the necessary documents, pamphlets, material and other data required and thus anticipate the needs of the respective commissions in connection with the matters under investigation. Our large cities have each during the past decade expended enough money for experts and special investigating commissions whose primary function has been the assembling and gathering of data and information which should have been contained in or obtained by a municipal department such as a municipal reference library sufficient to more than pay many times over the expense incident to the maintenance of an adequately equipped municipal reference library. The information obtained by such experts and commissions has rarely been preserved in any municipal department at the City Hall, or if stored or filed away has never been indexed or put in such shape as to be available for use.

METHODS OF WORK

It is not our intent to discuss at this time methods of cataloging, indexing, filing and other devices for meeting and serving the mechanical needs of a municipal reference library whereby the material is made available for the use of city officials. The handling of the materials in the municipal reference library has been discussed at length in Mr. John B. Kaiser's work on Law, Legislative and Municipal Reference Libraries. The acquisition, classification, cataloging, shelving and filing of the material in the municipal reference library have similarly been considered and discussed before this Association, before the American Library Association, in the Library Journal, in Special Libraries and elsewhere. There

is, however, one point to be emphasized in this connection which should go far toward increasing the value of a municipal reference library as a public utility. One of the primary functions and duties of the municipal reference library is to so prepare and digest the material on file that it may be placed at the disposal and made available to city officials at the earliest possible time and in the most compact and ready manner. The librarian can send to or place before a member of the city's engineering staff, of its law department, of the department of finance and of other departments the information on hand on various subjects confining the selection of material to a reasonable number of articles and those of not inordinate bulk. Such city employees will examine and make use of all or most of this material. The members of the city council, board of aldermen and heads of departments are loath to be burdened and usually too busy to examine, wade through and digest the contents of books, pamphlets, clippings and other material bearing upon the subjects under investigation. The work of abstracting, digesting and preparing succinct statements and reports must be done for them as a preliminary to any attempt these officials may make in an investigation of a subject.

The municipal reference library, therefore, is often required to prepare reports on various subjects for the use of members of the city council in place of sending to the latter articles and material bearing upon any subject. The preparation of such reports is an arduous task, requiring time, an adequate staff and absolute accuracy.

It is well to emphasize that, equally important with non-partisanship in the administration of the municipal reference library, is accuracy in the assembling and digesting of material and information for the use of city officials. The library in all its work should consider accuracy a fundamental axiom and premise, and care should be taken that the material and reports sent out from the municipal reference library are absolutely accurate. Should it be noised about in the committee rooms of the city council or the board of aldermen that the work turned out by the municipal reference library and for which it stands sponsor, is slipshod and inaccurate, and if department heads and other city employees view the information placed at their disposal with suspicion and lack of confidence, it need hardly be pointed out that the usefulness of the municipal reference library as an aid to the public official in his public work and activities will be effectively impaired.

The Municipal Reference Library in Chicago is often called upon by aldermen and administrative heads to prepare reports and statements on various subjects. In assuming the burden and responsibility of authorship the library has aimed to be fair, careful and accurate in its methods. In view of

the popular interest aroused in some of the reports submitted by the Municipal Reference Library to city officials it was deemed advisable to give them a wider circulation than was the case with the typewritten documents, in which latter form the report originally appeared. It was, therefore, decided to publish and print reports in which public interest had been manifested, as municipal reference bulletins. Six municipal reference bulletins have been published up to the present time. Numbers 1 and 2, respectively, a report on rates of fare of public motor vehicles in fifteen large cities and a report on municipal dance halls were prepared at the request of Carter H. Harrison when mayor of Chicago. Bulletin number 3, a study of rapid transit in seven cities, was prepared at the request of Theodore K. Long, member of the Chicago City Council. Bulletin number 4 was a report on the payment of fines in installments by offenders, prepared for Alderman Thomas D. Nash. Bulletin number 5 was a report on speculation and scalping in amusement tickets, prepared for Willis O. Nance, member of the Chicago City Council and chairman of its Committee on Health. Bulletin number 6 on the subject of municipal flags was prepared at the request of James A. Kearns for the use of the Chicago Municipal Flag Commission, of which he is Chairman. The publication of these reports in bulletin form has excited interest in a number of circles and proved popular and acceptable to other municipal reference libraries, institutions of learning, public libraries and periodicals and magazines devoted to municipal affairs. The printed bulletins have frequently received mention and have been referred to in magazines and in books, among which may be cited the American City and the National Municipal Review, and Professor Charles Zuehlke's recent book on American Municipal Progress.

The activities of a municipal reference library should not be limited to gathering information and other data merely upon the request of an individual officer. The proceedings of the Chicago City Council, as published after each meeting of the latter, are replete with subjects and topics introduced by aldermen or referred to committees of the City Council upon which the Library has information and it could, with adequate help, render this information readily accessible to the alderman introducing the ordinance, measure or proposal, or to the Chairman, member or subcommittee of the appropriate committee of the City Council to which the ordinance or measure has been referred. The proceedings or minutes of city council could thus be ransacked week after week by the library assistants, a search made in the library for all the material available upon the matter under investigation by the alderman, chairman, member or subcommittee of the city council charged

with the investigation of such plan or measure. This material then could be placed at their disposal, or at the disposal of the city council as a body. This would enable the members of the city council or board of aldermen to come into direct contact with the library and assist in making the latter useful at all times to each and every member. Likewise, local newspaper reports showing the matters under investigation or discussion by municipal department and bureau heads and other city officials should be noted and the data available in the library bearing on such matters, could similarly be placed at their disposal.

The library should obtain material of a local character bearing on local questions and collect and compile statistical information relating to the activities of all branches of the municipal government. All reports printed or published by the different governing bodies of a city or any departments or bureaus of the municipal government should be kept on file in the library.

A mimeographed list of subjects should be prepared weekly, bi-weekly or monthly, showing the new material and accessions received in the library. These subject lists should be distributed widely to members of the city council, department or bureau heads, and other city officials as well as to civic organizations and the press. As an instance of the matter to be contained in such lists, may be cited, a subject list of reference to new ordinances introduced, reported upon or passed in other cities in the United States and Europe. Such a list will furnish food for thought to members of the city council and enable them to propose similar legislation or to crystallize certain ideas which they may have carried with them but have never been able to put together in concrete form in the shape of ordinances or other legislative plans and proposals. It need not be repeated here how such subject references, showing new administrative measures undertaken or accomplished in other cities, would similarly be of benefit to department and bureau heads in the city government when thus brought to their attention.

Paraphrasing Sir Francis Galton's definition of statistical science we may say that the object of the municipal reference library is to condense information concerning large groups of allied facts into brief and compendious expressions suitable for discussion.

SHOULD BE NON PARTISAN

It would be a blighting influence on the work of a municipal reference library should the latter during any period of its existence be viewed as biased or partisan in its relation to public men and measures. Its function should be to assemble facts and material and permit these to speak for themselves. A municipal reference library should never assemble information and facts in connection

with any investigation or problem unless the same are free from distortion and bias. It cannot attempt to influence legislation or administrative action. It should consider itself a guide and help to intelligent legislation and administration, but never otherwise. The personality of the individual should not be traced in its work, in so far as such personality represents bias or selfish endeavor. It does not hold a brief on behalf of the people as a whole, save in so far as the work of the municipal reference library may be representative of the interests of the people by standing for greater efficiency and science in the art of government. It cannot support or oppose any man or measure and remain a municipal reference library. It should not, likewise, be considered a publicity bureau whose function shall be to throw light on the deeds and misdeeds of city officials. Often the municipal reference library can enable the members of the city council or a department head to arrive at the basic facts and intrinsic worth of any measure or proposal. When a department head or a subordinate makes a recommendation to the city council it may be that such recommendation is filled with the view, opinion or bias of its proponent. Similarly, where department heads are not under civic service the latter change their views as often as the incumbents of these positions change. Each official under a change of administration, quite often, has different views from his predecessor, unable sufficiently to comprehend the relation and continuity of municipal work, with the result that the City Council or the chief administrative head of a municipality has no fixed, definite knowledge of procedure to be adopted or followed. It can readily be seen how valuable the work of the municipal reference library should be at such a juncture, as the only central, organized, continuous machinery for the assembling and collection of material and information. It can offset the bias or altered views and policies of departments by presenting the historic development and chronology of each particular measure in the city's governmental affairs, as well as sustaining, or supporting, or explaining each measure in the light of the experience and accomplishments of other cities. Thus the particular view or opinion of the author of any proposed measure will be given a proper setting and its proper relation and due proportion to the subject under investigation in its entirety and will not be permitted to dominate the whole investigation by reason of the lack of adequate information and material necessary to interpret and counteract such dominance.

The members of the city council and department and bureau heads are not averse to making use of the information assembled by the municipal reference library, if the same can be relied upon as impartial and accurate. If it is intended to have the municipi-

pal reference library perform a genuine public service it is essential that the administration of such library be kept out of politics and that its various employees be chosen according to the principles and methods of civil service. A non-partisan, scientific administration of the work of the library cannot reasonably be expected under other conditions. Conducted in a non-partisan spirit and anchored on the merit system it should be able to facilitate intelligent legislation by the city council or board of aldermen as well as by various municipal departments. Such a policy would make its work non-partisan, scientific, efficient and accurate.

It is much to be preferred that the work of the municipal reference library be felt, by reason of the quiet influence it is exerting on the work of the legislator and administrator and by the confidential, secretarial relations thus established between the library and the official. In a large measure the success of the library is dependent upon the influence it exerts in enabling such official to arrive at and form a fair judgment as to the measures under consideration.

The municipal reference library, devoid of the private opinions and personal influences of its employees, solely devoting itself to the impartial collection and assembling of facts and information for the use of public officials, presenting such facts without fear or favor to officials for their use and action, regardless of the men or measures affected thereby, should be compared in the honesty and impartiality of its work and the rectitude of its intentions to the Horatian ideal of the just man who fears neither the frown of a king, nor trembles at the clamor and fury of the mob.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The sources of municipal information are chiefly documentary, secreted in the reports and publications issued by the numerous boards and departments of the federal, state and local governments. Books on municipal government by authorities and on special phases of municipal legislation and administration should be available. The city charters and ordinances are helpful as aids in comparative legislation. The annual municipal departmental reports must be thoroughly indexed and analyzed and they may be available as sources. Here lie hidden amidst a mass of irrelevant material data on street cleaning, refuse disposal, sewage disposal, paving, harbors, traffic regulation, public baths and comfort stations, the milk problem, municipal revenues and other measures of municipal activity, which taxes the skill of experienced classifiers in the attempt to garner the wheat from the chaff.

Extended studies are made occasionally by acknowledged experts in their respective fields for cities seeking ways and means to

solve vexing problems, among a number, the following being instanced: Parsons-Herling-Whinery report on street cleaning, Arnold's report on traction matters, Burgess and Jackson reports on the telephone, Haskins and Sells on municipal accounting, Chicago City Waste Commission on garbage and refuse disposal, the report of the Chicago City Council Committee on Crime and the reports made by the Chicago Municipal Markets Commission on municipal markets and on a practical plan for relieving destitution and unemployment.

As a means of keeping abreast with current municipal legislation, it is essential that the published proceedings of boards of aldermen and city councils be obtained regularly and indexed carefully. Reports made by state boards and commissions having jurisdiction over municipal matters can be obtained upon payment of express charges or postage, if not gratis. Clippings from newspapers and magazines furnish a fund of information hard to procure otherwise. The local public and special reference libraries are additional sources and frequently the working libraries of specialists, experts and corporations furnish the data for which an unavailing search has been made. Other methods falling or proving unsatisfactory, questionnaires may be sent out to those able to furnish information, and the replies duly summarized and tabulated.

It is not here intended to demarcate the sources of municipal information. On the contrary, they may be defined as being entirely dependent on the ingenuity and originality of the librarian and his staff.

It should be emphasized that the collection of material on file in a municipal reference library be in close relation to its immediate and future needs and activities. Material no longer used or obsolete should be discarded with the same zeal and patience with which it was at one time acquired. One of the most difficult problems before the municipal reference library is the elimination of unusable and obsolete data and the retention of live matter. It has well been called a question of the selection of material rather than one of mere collection and retention. The library should contain data and other information sufficiently broad in scope to obviate the necessity of obtaining information and facts by resorting to the sending out of elaborate questionnaires. The last named means of eliciting information resorted to by city officials and private organizations has long been looked upon as a nuisance and an agony by those who may be fated to be its victims. A questionnaire if conscientiously answered by the recipient is invaluable as a method of obtaining information, but if filled out in a perfunctory and careless manner can only be considered as useless and a waste of time, effort and money. For this reason it is advisable that the municipal reference library collect full information on

all possible sorts of subjects relating to its peculiar field of work in order that much fruitless correspondence be foregone. The questionnaire is the latest improved scheme and plan devised to shift the burden of investigation and research upon one's fellow man, who most often is a stranger and located hundreds and perhaps a thousand miles away. It is not the intention here at this time to belittle or underestimate the uses of the questionnaire, but it should be emphasized that the true method of investigation is that whereby such means of obtaining information are only resorted to when all other methods based upon the efforts and pains of the librarian have failed to supply the desired or needed information.

AN AGENCY FOR THE EXCHANGE OF MUNICIPAL DOCUMENTS

In no American city is the work of distributing municipal documents handled in a systematic and adequate manner. There are but few cities which possess a single agency for their distribution to libraries, institutions of learning, officials, periodicals and citizens. The regular edition of each annual report of a municipal department as a rule comprises one thousand volumes, although some departments exceed this number. Ordinarily, from twenty-five to fifty per cent of the entire edition are bound in cloth, although some departments print the whole edition in this manner. Under conditions obtaining at present each department has its own mailing list for the distribution of the annual reports and in some instances such lists are prepared with care. The distribution made by each municipality of its annual reports is in nearly all cases wholly local, unscientific and wasteful. The municipal reference library should be selected as a central agency for the distribution and exchange of municipal documents. In Chicago the Municipal Reference Library, under an ordinance passed by the City Council, has been designated as the medium of exchange for the official documents, annual reports and publications of the city with those of other cities and institutions. It has been the policy of the Library to enter into an arrangement with libraries and other institutions in various cities whereby the latter are made the official depositories of the annual reports, documents and publications of the City of Chicago, on the basis of the exchange of these documents for the official documents and reports of other cities.

The importance of a planned and intelligent distribution of public documents to libraries is evident from the fact that under present conditions when municipal departments publish annual reports, the editions of such reports are, of necessity, limited and the distribution is not arranged in a systematic manner so that these reports may really reach the persons and institutions in-

terested in the same. Each department serves as a distributing point and there is no careful comparison of mailing lists. There may be no complete list of American cities or libraries, many perhaps being omitted, while others are duplicated.

Frequently a department head holding an elective or appointive office sends a report, elaborately bound with gilt edges, and graced with his and his subordinates' portraits, to his political and personal friends and followers, who, after admiring the clearly evident greatness of their friend in office, never read even a single page in the ornate volume and soon toss it aside and eventually it finds its place among scrap and on the junk heap. It has been estimated that fully sixty per cent of all public reports after a comparatively short time find their way to the scrap heap and thence to the paper mill. On the other hand, on account of this lack of discrimination in the distribution of official municipal documents, libraries, universities, civic organizations, citizens and students really interested in municipal departmental work and activity are often unable to obtain a copy of the report.

The municipal reference library should be intrusted with the work of distributing and exchanging municipal documents and be required to keep a complete list of the receivers of these reports and adequate mailing lists. The distribution of the public documents of a municipality should be made and arranged according to an intelligent and systematic plan. The library after supplying the members of the administrative and legislative branches of its own city government, should send such reports to the local newspapers, to special technical magazines and journals interested in the same, to the officials and public libraries of other cities willing to receive such reports on an exchange basis, to universities and other institutions of learning which may desire them and to the general public upon express demand and request.

In order to eliminate the waste incurred by a municipality in the unsystematic distribution of its public reports and documents it is urged that all municipal reports, documents and publications, no matter where issued, should be distributed from one central bureau, agency and source and that the municipal reference library be fixed upon as the most logical bureau or agency for the distribution of municipal documents in a scientific manner. By placing this duty and function upon the municipal reference library it is believed that not only will the use value of municipal documents be increased thereby, but the expense annually incurred by our municipalities in the publication of the same will be proportionately decreased.

AS A CENTRAL CLEARING HOUSE

In nearly every municipality newly elected city officials find themselves at a loss how to proceed. Inquiries are often made by newly elected aldermen or newly appointed department heads regarding the means of obtaining information on municipal activity and pipes were removed from both engines and procedure. The municipal reference library could act as a clearing house not only for the use of city officials and department heads, but also of the general body of citizens in each city and of other cities concerning the large mass of information and facts relative to the city government, existing and on file in the various departments and bureaus of the municipal service. The library could serve as a clearing house to answer requests and questionnaires from other cities for information concerning the municipal government and its public work.

In order to offset the ill-repute acquired by the questionnaire on account of the unreasonable uses to which it has been put and for the purpose of re-establishing it as a legitimate means of obtaining information, it is well to recognize the need of establishing in each scheme of municipal government a certain department or bureau through which the large number of inquiries concerning the various avenues of municipal activity may be cleared. The selection of the municipal reference library as such a clearing house of facts concerning local governmental activities would be entirely in accord with the fitness of things, inasmuch as it is the one place in the municipal body politics where facts can be obtained readily and with a maximum efficiency since it is possessed of the necessary material and sources of information. In this respect the municipal reference library may be compared to the large department store, the latter being equipped with the various and innumerable needs affecting human life, all under the same roof. Similarly, the municipal reference library may be considered a vast storeroom in the municipal government, inasmuch as it has in its files and on its shelves the information and facts relating to all the avenues, branches and fields of municipal activity, service and work. The municipal reference library if thus organized as the department or bureau in the municipal government through which inquiries of all sorts may be cleared will serve as an efficient agent in the elimination of the waste of time and effort formerly prevalent by reason of its lack. That this waste is considerable is evident from the fact that often the outside inquirer will write a half dozen or more officials in the same city in the hope of receiving an adequate reply. The officials in each case will probably send replies to the one single inquirer, utterly impervious to the fact that a neighbor official is doing the same thing and that one com-

plete reply from some single local official would answer the purpose.

It is this need of a central source from which accurate municipal information may be obtained which is apparent to nearly all department and bureau heads in the city government and which the municipal reference library can undoubtedly meet in an adequate and assured manner. The mayor and many other officials in each city frequently receive requests for information covering every detail of municipal administration and legislation. They are not always in a position to comply with these requests, for sundry reasons, and the waste basket becomes the ready destination of many of them; or such inquiries require so much time that the official must sacrifice or neglect his regular work and duties and thus many remain unanswered or are but imperfectly answered.

George McAneny, formerly president of the Borough of Manhattan, New York City, in his address before the American Library Association at Kaaterskill, New York, in 1913, described this waste of effort, time and money on the part of city officials in a very forceful manner. "Niagara unharnessed was wasting much less power than are we officials, school superintendents, mayors and engineers who are answering such questionnaires. It would be remarkable enough if we always answered right; but most of us answer quite inadequately, and many of us answer wrong. Last year, a certain national society wrote me, asking certain questions about civil service reform. I had had more or less to do for some years with that line of public service. My instinct was to take time from pressing duties to answer these questions; but a neighbor who had received a similar set of questions was thoughtful enough to write to this national body and suggest that before he answered he would like to know how many other New York officials and private agencies had received the same set of questions. It appeared then that twenty different people, including a dozen officials, had been asked to fill out that blank. Whereupon it was suggested that instead of drawing upon twenty people who did not possess the facts, the investigator might turn directly to the Civil Service Commission that did possess the facts, and there, no doubt, he readily found what he wanted. Now, if a municipal reference library could have served as a clearing house, it would have been brought to light at once that one answer would have served the purpose of twenty, or that one answer, at least, would have served the purpose of the dozen official answers. Moreover, just as the official reports give fresher material than published books, such correspondence, manuscript reports of investigating committees, etc., give fresher material than published reports."

In view of the ill-assorted replies now

being sent out by various departments concerning their respective activities, as a means of avoiding duplication of effort and preventing waste of time and money it should be the policy of the administrative head of each city to determine and fix upon the municipal reference library the duty and responsibility of performing this function and acting as a general repository, fact center and clearing house of information concerning city affairs. It should be a general bureau of information and publicity for the use of local officials and of other cities. It should be the central agency in each municipality to which inquiries for statements of facts of all sorts may be referred, either by city officials or by the public. Whenever special investigations are ordered the municipal reference library should be able to assemble and supply the necessary data and material, so that the investigating body will not be compelled to resort to the wasteful process in each case of creating its own agency for ascertaining facts.

AS AID IN PREPARATION OF UNIFORM MUNICIPAL REPORTS

The municipal reference library in its work of gathering comparative data and information on municipal work from the reports and publications of other cities finds itself brought face to face with the urgent need of uniform, standardized, tables of facts and information in order that complete and accurate comparisons may be made of the work and activity of various municipalities and places. The library could readily assist in improving the sources of municipal statistics and information embodied in reports, by calling to the attention of department and bureau heads and recommending for their adoption a uniform system for recording these facts in order that they may be comparable with the facts and information contained in similar reports issued by other cities. It is believed that if the matter is properly presented to a department or bureau head the latter will readily avail himself of the opportunity offered toward making the annual record of departmental work and activities understandable, comparable and of additional value. Excepting as the information concerning the public work of a city is presented to taxpayers through the columns of newspapers, the public knows absolutely nothing about the work accomplished by the municipal departments during the year. The annual reports are published at no definite period, often nine months or even a year or more after the time covered in the report when the work of the department for that particular period has been lost sight of. They are seldom in such a shape that the ordinary man could find therein the information he is seeking because the comptroller of a city may be a first-class financier, the engineer may be an expert in

his profession, the street commissioner may be an able administrator and still lack the faculty of writing or compiling books.

What information, for instance is conveyed in the following, taken from an official report of one of our cities: "The old jacket pipes were removed from both engines and new brass pipes and fittings, including two new reducing valves substituted. All the main brasses were refitted and the cross-head pins trued up. Four new steel steam and exhaust valve stems and four brass valve seats for the air pumps were placed on both engines. The oil and drip pans were relined and repaired. The back wall was rebuilt. The front of the coal shed was repaired. The two pumping engines were repainted." And this removing, relining and repainting continues for several pages.

About thirty pages of the departmental report of a certain city are filled "as a matter of record," with such worse than useless items of interest to no one, as these: "Albany street, Union Park street, to bend grade for edgestone"; "Atlantic street no 615, measurements of sidewalk paving"; "Beach street, southerly corner, Washington street, line and walk paving." These pages are practically valueless and barren of useful information. They are not exceptional cases. The quotations are typical of the annual reports of many cities. The reports of many departments are superfluous, because they cannot be understood except by persons thoroughly familiar with the inner working of the departments; besides which many trivial technical details are given, and many important data are omitted.

An expert employed by the Boston Finance Commission made a careful study of the numerous publications of the City and estimated that the "City Documents" for 1907 contained about 650 pages of statistics duplicated in some form, about 600 pages superfluous statistics and about 600 pages of useless reading matter, a total of about 1,850 out of 4,756 pages, or about one-third of the whole.

The statistical output alone, some 3,500 pages, was exceedingly large compared with other cities where scientific methods are used. In the city of Paris the annual statistical exhibit covers about 800 pages; the London statistics occupy less than 600 pages, and the city of Berlin, with the most elaborate municipal statistics department in the world, presents the report of all municipal departments in 526 pages, and general statistics in the form of a year book of about 500 pages. In other words the city of Boston required almost four times as much printed matter as Berlin in order to set forth annually its municipal activities and did it with much less adequate results. A report published long after the facts therein occurred may serve for occasional reference, but it does not fill entirely its purpose. We are of a quick-living age; things occurring today

are forgotten tomorrow; our newspapers, the disseminators and critics of events, will hardly take cognizance of anything six or nine months old, unless it is absolutely startling in its nature. Most of our cities publish their reports long after the period covered therein has passed. Six or nine months is nothing unusual and some cities wait even a whole year or more. There is no sound reason why a report should not be published within ninety days after the termination of the period covered by the report.

Speaking generally the annual reports are characterized by belated publication, unnecessary duplication, the inclusion of useless and the omission of useful data, the absence of competent analyses, logical order and proper indexing, and by prolixity of statement.

The size of some annual reports is in inverse ratio to the importance of the functions of the department or to the availability of the subject matter for public presentation. Errors in the reports are not corrected nor their omission supplied in any subsequent publication. Each department sets its own standard.

The duplications are remarkable. In some instances matter appears in the written part of a report and again in tabular form, what is given in a summary appears elsewhere with amplifications which rarely lend new values; and sometimes language appropriate for some particular report appears in identical form in subsequent reports of the department. Facts set forth in the reports of one department are set forth with equal or greater fullness in the reports of another department. Certain repetitions of course are unavoidable and due allowance should be made for them; but the duplications are very great and generally inexcusable.

How many citizens after receiving such books, will preserve them? The public should receive an easily comprehended representation of facts in concise form, at the earliest possible time, and at frequent intervals that will at a glance show the work of a department and the exact condition of affairs in a city. Such work, however, can be done only by officials especially trained and fitted for it, and it is a question whether the municipal reference library is not the proper agency to undertake it.

The work of the municipal reference library would be much lessened through the time saved if the municipal reports are in proper form and contain what they properly should include.

The municipal reference library should aim to improve the sources of municipal information by prescribing a system for recording the facts that should be presented in the department reports. The adoption by the several departments of the recommended system of records and returns should be made compulsory. The municipal reference library should have the power to prescribe

the form and scope of the department reports, and to examine them before publication. At present no official can learn much about the city government from a study of the department reports. It would be of incalculable assistance if the important facts of administration were lucidly and concisely presented by means of a city manual or year book. The latter should be statistical in form, a substitute for the ill-assorted data now scattered through department reports, and afford a complete statistical picture, accompanied by the necessary textual analysis, of municipal activities and interests. Only a municipal reference library it is believed can furnish such a survey and afford the necessary orderly presentation of facts.

A most encouraging step in this direction was taken during the administration of Mayor Hunt in Cincinnati in 1912. A conscientious effort was made to present a readable text prepared in such a manner as to encourage inspection by the average citizen and make possible an intelligent understanding of the municipal work accomplished during the year. The reports of the several city officers, boards and departments have been prepared with the idea of presenting them in a more intelligible and interesting form than has heretofore prevailed. The statements of the administrative officers deal with the important activities and innovations of the year. Illustrations have been added, the statistical data condensed and much merely perfunctory matter eliminated. In their sequence the reports give a fairly comprehensive history of the city government for the year. Where formerly the annual reports of the municipal departments of Cincinnati appeared in greater bulk with each passing year, the volume of reports for the year 1910 containing 1,356 pages and being four inches in width, it remained for Mayor Hunt to issue the annual reports of his city covering the departmental work for the year 1912 with but 624 pages in the volume and having a width of one and one-fourth inches.

BILL DRAFTING

Bill drafting work when properly conducted should be of great value in the procedure of a city council. Each municipality is equipped with a staff created by law to draw bills, resolutions and ordinances for the use of the aldermen. The law departments in our cities should be amply prepared to execute the duties attached to bill drafting. It is a grave question if this work really belongs to the activities of the municipal reference library. It is much to be preferred that expert draftsmen be detailed to this work from the staff of the law department and required to work in co-ordination and co-operation with the municipal refer-

ence library. Such draftsmen should be brought to avail themselves of the information and material on file in the library as an aid in the thorough and adequate preparation of laws, ordinances, resolution, orders, contracts and other legal papers affecting and touching upon the city's business and interests.

There is, however, a decided division of labor in the work of the municipal reference library and of the bill drafting bureau. The two fields of work, however, should be considered interrelated, in close co-operation and co-ordinate so that the draftsmen may have at their disposal the necessary material from which after a comparative study they may embody the best features into proposed laws and ordinances.

By reason of the constant use of the material on file in the municipal reference library the draftsmen will be more fully fitted to prepare legislative acts which will be considerate of the various interests in the community affected by any proposed piece of legislation and be able to withstand the test of the courts.

The work of bill drafting should be considered distinct and separate from the collection of information and the preparation of data and material. One of the rules of the drafting room of the Wisconsin Legislative Reference Library provides that no bills shall be drafted in the reference room, a separate drafting room and a separate force being provided for bill drafting purposes. The one, however, should not be subordinate to the other in any way, inasmuch as both perform equally important functions. In the relation existing between the two the bill drafting bureau or division may be considered the dynamic force and the municipal reference library the static element. The former, by reason of the ordinances, laws and other measures which it prepares and drafts, should absorb the information carefully prepared for its use and benefit by the municipal reference library. Any bill drafting bureau in order to function capably and effectively should feel and acknowledge its dependence upon the municipal reference library for the necessary equipment and tools with which it must work. In consequence, there should exist the utmost harmony between the bill drafter, who is required to refer steadily to the sources of information on file and the municipal reference library; and the latter should so collect and prepare its material and data with the view of meeting the requirements and anticipating the needs of the bill drafting bureau. It is, therefore, believed that where the two fields of work are not made subject to a single organization they should be considered co-ordinate, interdependent and co-operative.

AS CUSTODIAN OF LOCAL DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

In nearly each city in the United States it is extremely difficult to find in one central bureau or office copies of the reports, documents and publications issued by its various departments and officials since the beginning of its corporate history. As a rule, the annual reports of departments and bureaus are kept segregated in each department and bureau, it being tacitly assumed that the latter will, naturally, keep a complete file of its own annual reports since its establishment. This duty, which is not imposed by ordinance, and, therefore, is purely voluntary and lacking the cohesive force of the compulsory requirements of a municipal law, is thus really no duty at all. A department head elected or appointed in office frequently upon leaving office takes with him the various departmental reports issued by him. The members of a city's law department or of the city council desiring to consult the annual reports of various departments and bureaus are required to run to and fro from floor to floor to the offices of each department in order to consult the annual reports and publications of the same. In most cases these reports cannot even be found on file in the offices of the respective departments or bureaus issuing the same.

In order to preserve printed archives and records, encourage proper continuity of work and service in municipal government and standardize municipal functions, and activities it is imperative that each city set aside and authorize the creation of a central bureau or agency in the city hall whose function shall be to keep on its shelves for the use of city officials and the general public complete files of the annual and special reports, documents and publications issued officially by the municipal government since the beginning of its corporate history.

MAPS AND PLATS

The gathering of local maps, plats, surveys, charts, and the like should be considered a desirable field of work which the municipal reference library may assume as within its province. Frequently inquiries are received from city officials and citizens for ward maps, maps showing the annexations made to the city at different periods since its incorporation, maps showing the distribution of population by wards, election precincts and census enumeration districts, maps showing the industrial, manufacturing and commercial areas of the city, steam, elevated and surface railway maps, maps showing the prohibition, local option and wet areas, maps showing the assessor's tax valuation districts, maps showing the location of parks and playgrounds, water-works and other public utility enterprises. It should also be considered worth the time of the library to

collect maps of other cities, both domestic and foreign, showing residence and industrial zones, harbor districts and transportation systems. All such maps and plats are of value to city officials, engineers, teachers, students and social workers.

LOCATION

The municipal reference library has demonstrated that it has its place in the scheme of municipal government and that it performs duties which do not impinge upon, overlap or duplicate those of any other department. Experience has shown that the library should operate and function from quarters in the city hall. It is not necessary to obtain a large amount of space for the library in the city hall but sufficient space should be obtained to provide for the librarian, a stenographer and proper shelving. Every municipality should provide space in its city hall for a municipal reference library. A resolution is now pending before the Chicago City Council providing that whenever a new subdivision of land is platted in the city limits, space must be set aside in such new subdivision for a public school and playground before the plat of the same can be or will be approved by the city authorities. In this way future generations will be saved large and unnecessary expenditures for school and playground purposes due to the increment in land values. Each future city hall built by a municipality should similarly be required to have set aside sufficient space on one of its floors for the establishment of a municipal reference library as a necessary part of municipal house-keeping and economy. In the city of Chicago upon the completion of the present City Hall in the year 1911 the Chicago City Council set aside 3,500 square feet for the use of the Municipal Reference Library, the dimensions of the room being seventy feet in length by fifty feet in width. Steel book stacks and filing cases, a large oak reading table with a glass top, desk and telephone for the use of the employees were installed in the room. In addition to the foregoing the library is equipped with suitable storage room and vault space.

In obtaining an allotment of space for the library it is suggested that the same be obtained adjacent or convenient to the council chamber or to the council committee rooms for obvious reasons.

CONTROL

The tendency some years ago to place the administration and control over the municipal reference library in the public library seemingly has been justified wherever such has been the practice. It is in accord with the wider trend prevalent in municipal affairs of consolidating and co-ordinating like functions and services in municipal admin-

istration and preventing duplication of effort by the creation of a multiplicity of independent organizations and departments. Basically, however, the leading reasons for placing the municipal reference library under the control of the public library are that the latter is not subject to the changes and fluctuations incident to other branches of the public service, that it has more standardization, has developed principles as to continuity of service, has the necessary scientific, technical, educational and mechanical equipment required to supplement the work of the municipal reference library and last and perhaps most important is happily free from the odor, taint and turmoil of local partisan politics.

The Chicago Municipal Reference Library placed under the supervision and control of the Chicago Public Library has been fortunate in effecting and receiving the co-operation of the staff of the latter in all its numerous branches. A messenger service has been arranged between the two libraries and the vast resources of the main library are readily placed at the disposal of the Municipal Reference Library in the least possible space of time. The very helpful advice and co-operation of Mr. Henry E. Legler, Librarian of the Chicago Public Library, has enabled the Municipal Reference Library to cater to an increasing patronage, caused it to avoid pitfalls and dangers, which undetected would have impaired its usefulness and effectiveness and to steer a straight and true course in the service it has rendered to city officials and employees.

CONCRETE RESULTS ACCOMPLISHED IN ONE YEAR

By way of illustrating the varied work of a municipal reference library it is our purpose to describe the activity of the Chicago Municipal Reference Library in important particulars during the year 1915. It should be noted, however, that the work tabulated herewith is by no means an indication of its complete activity and service to the city officials and the general public during the year. It but helps to give some idea of the manifold activities, services and duties which the Library is required to undertake and respond to. Statistics and summaries showing the volume of work are more or less misleading and no actual measure of its performances and accomplishments. Its service and value to the municipality can only be measured by the amount of information supplied and not by the number of volumes it issues.

It should be remembered that the purpose and function of the municipal reference library is not to supply intellectual recreation and diversion to its patrons, but to act as a public servant, and as a workshop and laboratory for all classes and degrees of public

officials in their daily work and daily problems.

The Municipal Reference Library in Chicago is open from 9:00 a. m. to 5:00 p. m., each week day, except Saturday, when the hours are from 9:00 a. m. to 12:00 m. During the year 1915 the Library had 5,355 recorded visitors and 1,707 calls on the telephone for information. Statistics of the amount of correspondence received and sent out by the Library were not kept during the past year. One of the functions of the Municipal Reference Library is the distribution of officials' reports of the City of Chicago to libraries, institutions of learning and citizens in Chicago and elsewhere. During the year 1915 the Library distributed 9,240 of such public documents by mail and to those applying in person at the library.

The Municipal Reference Library during the past year was used by the following different departments, bureaus and branches of the city government:

Mayor
Municipal Court
Department of Finance
Department of Public Works
Department of Law
City Attorney
Prosecuting Attorney
Department of Health
Civil Service Commission
Department of Police
Department of Fire
Board of Local Improvements
Department of Small Parks
Department of Gas and Electricity
Department of Public Service
Department of Public Welfare
Department of Supplies
Department of Smoke
City Clerk
City Treasurer
Bureau of Water
Bureau of Engineering
Bureau of Streets
Bureau of Maps and Plats
Bureau of Architecture
Bureau of Police Records
Bureau of Fire Prevention
Cook County Coroner
Cook County Comptroller
Cook County Civil Service Commission

Fifty per cent, or one-half of the total membership of the City Council, consisting of seventy aldermen, availed themselves of the services of the Library and nearly all of the foregoing number of aldermanic visitors and patrons of the Library had occasion to request its services frequently and on numerous recurring occasions.

In addition to the patrons of the Library enumerated above there were a large number of other visitors, composed of business and professional men, representatives of civic, labor, commercial and citizens' or-

ganizations, university students, social workers, representatives of the press, writers and the general public.

The following subjects, among many others, may be cited as having engaged the activities and services of Municipal Reference Library during the year 1915:

- Pool room legislation and regulations
- Municipal laundries
- Automatic and municipal telephone systems
- Overcrowding of passenger vessels
- Organization of public employees into unions and associations
- Municipal and private pension systems for employees
- County jail architecture
- Administration of public correctional institutions
- Municipal Flags
- Non-inflammable films in motion picture theatres
- Statistics and information on amount of work performed by members of the City Council during their respective terms of office
- Wages paid day laborers in City employ in various cities
- Schools of instruction for patrolmen and detectives
- Safety nets and devices for aerial performers
- Public Utility galleries
- Automobile accidents in large cities
- Removal of snow and ice from sidewalks
- Lobbying
- Smoke nuisance
- Rabies
- Licensing and muzzling dogs
- Manufacture, storage and sale of fireworks and explosives
- Practical plans for dealing with unemployment
- Carrying of freight on street and elevated railways
- Regulations governing the growing of weeds in vacant lots and in parkways
- Public dance hall ordinances
- Traffic signal systems
- Proper illumination and lighting of public buildings, places and conveyances
- Municipal lodging houses and the work test
- Mortality statistics of infants
- Electrification of steam railways
- Speculation and scalping in theatre tickets
- Methods of controlling the social evil in cities
- Laws and ordinances governing the spreading and collection of taxes
- Ordinances of various cities abolishing and prohibiting family and ladies' entrance signs in connection with saloons
- Ordinances relating to the display and sale of firearms
- Anti-noise ordinances and measures
- Ordinances establishing and reports describing the work of municipal morals commissions

Municipal home rule and the control of public utilities

Creation of residential and industrial zones

- Centralization in City purchasing
- Departments of public recreation in cities
- Multiplicity of taxing and governing bodies in Chicago and their consolidation
- Municipal markets
- Rates of interest on public funds
- Public schools and social centers
- Municipal ownership of public utilities
- School and vacant lot gardens
- Street playgrounds

Public bonds as collateral security for municipal funds on deposit in banks

At the beginning of each Council year and the commencement of the summer vacation of the City Council, a letter is sent to each member of the Chicago City Council, calling his attention to the purpose for which the Municipal Reference Library is created and its willingness to gather information and other data upon such topic or topics as the member of the City Council may indicate, stating specifically that it will tell him:

First: What cities have passed ordinances or taken action upon any particular subject.

Second: Where similar ordinances are pending or under discussion.

Third: Where valuable discussions upon any subject may be obtained.

The Municipal Reference Library has been of considerable aid to public officials and also to civic, business and industrial interests from time to time. Among the more important investigations which have been undertaken by the Library and have proved of direct monetary value to the people of Chicago may be cited the following four cases:

(a) The Library was requested by a city official to compute the geographical center of area; the center of population, the business center and the industrial center of the City of Chicago. As a result of an investigation made, the five centers were determined and the center of area was fixed at the point of intersection of 37th street and Ashland avenue. Certain business interests, desiring to create a new industrial and manufacturing district in the city of Chicago and have this industrial and manufacturing district as nearly in the center of the city of Chicago as possible made use of the computation of the Library and located what is now known as the Central Manufacturing District of the city of Chicago in the district bounded by 35th street on the north and 39th street on the south; Morgan street on the east and Ashland avenue on the west, in order to have such manufacturing and industrial district within the heart of the geographical area of the city.

Since the computation made by the Library, this district has developed from a

cabbage-growing area to a highly developed industrial and manufacturing center and as the result of a systematic plan of development and to certain natural advantages secured to it because of its location in such center of the area of the City of Chicago. Today about 200 manufacturing concerns are occupying new buildings in this district, employing close to 15,000 persons and the value of business done aggregate many millions.

(b) Another investigation conducted by the Library was for a member of Chicago City Council who desired to gather data and information in contravention of the recommendation made by the Chicago Harbor Commission in 1909, fixing a uniform width between the spans of bridges at 200 feet. This member of the City Council believed that the traffic of the Chicago River did not require a greater clear bridge span than 140 feet except in certain portions of the main river where a clear span of 200 feet for a bridge might be advisable and desirable. The result of the investigation showed that an exaggerated idea prevailed of the importance of the big vessels in our lake trade. It was shown that there are not many boats of the 605 foot class on the Great Lakes, just as there are not many Imperators, Vaterlands and Lusitanias on the ocean. The bulk of the lake-carrying trade is done by vessels of medium size and of less than 500 feet in length. This fact was evidenced by a statistical table which proved that but 1 per cent of the total freight carried on the Great Lakes was carried by two boats having a length of 605 feet each. As a result of the facts and information submitted to the members of the City Council by this Library and which the alderman used in his argument before the Finance Committee and before the War Department, the City adopted a policy of building bridges having a clear span of 200 feet at certain points where the congestion of traffic demanded such construction and the building of bridges having a clear span of 140 feet at a large number of other points. The saving which the city achieved as a result of the adoption of this bridge building policy is made clear by the fact that a 200-foot bascule bridge costs the city of Chicago approximately \$350,000.00 as against a cost of \$250,000.00 for a bridge having a clear span of 140 feet.

(c) The Municipal Reference Library was requested to compile information and statistics showing the comparative rates of fare charged in the large cities of the world for public motor vehicles engaged in carrying passengers for hire. From the investigation made by the Library and transmitted to the Chicago City Council, it appeared that but one city had a higher rate of fare than Chicago. As a result of our report on this subject and of the communication submitted to the City Council, a new ordinance was drafted by and passed by the City Council which assured the people of Chicago reduced rates of fare and more economic serv-

ice by public motor vehicles engaged in carrying passengers for hire.

(d) The City Council authorized the appointment of a commission to make a comprehensive study and report on the subject of municipal markets and other agencies tending to bring the producer and the consumer into closer contact. At the request of Alderman James H. Lawley, who was appointed chairman of the Commission, the Municipal Reference Librarian consented to act as Secretary of the Commission and as the result of the investigation made by the Commission, compiled its preliminary report to the Chicago City Council. In this preliminary report an estimate is made of the annual saving that can be made in the cost of food to Chicago consumers, based upon the data and information accumulated by the Market Commission in the course of its investigation. This estimate showed a total saving per capita or per consumer of \$21.47, or of \$98.76 for each family in the City of Chicago.

CONCLUSION

The establishment of a municipal reference library by the city authorities should be considered as an investment and a public utility designed to bring adequate returns to the people. The rearing of the municipal structure laid out on broad, well-planned and stable lines requires disciplined and well informed action and endeavor. Constantine the Great, when laying out the boundaries of the imperial city which bears his name and which has withstood the shock of centuries, notwithstanding the inspiration he derived from on High, found it the part of wisdom to keep at his side capable and competent aids to advise and supply him with the facts and information they were able to place at his disposal. As an aid in fundamental city building the municipal reference library should be viewed as a pure business proposition, a productive municipal enterprise and legitimate investment.

A municipal reference library properly performing the functions thus outlined should prove a splendid scientific laboratory fitted and established for the benefit of municipal officials and employees. As a public utility furnishing facts and information to its citizens at home and elsewhere it should be considered a wise and substantial municipal investment in the same measure that the city provides pure air, water and light to all its residents.

By supplying unbiased data and information to public officials it will provide the means for greater efficiency and for an intelligent and sustained interest in public affairs. As the antithesis of ignorance in the conduct of municipal government it should readily find a place among those public agencies which in the language of Carl Schurz are foremost "in the struggle for free and honest government."

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"BUILT-UP" LIBRARY

"I went over to L—— to see Tom yesterday," said the student as I stopped a moment to shift a little load over to number four. "Tom has a mighty interesting job and I am glad, for he deserves it. And from all appearances he is making good."

"I am not surprised at that," I rejoined, "but tell us, what did you pick up? You usually come back from a trip with something good. You must have run across something well worth while in such an interesting plant."

"Yes, I roped in several ideas for my note book, but the best stunt of all was not exactly a part of the plant. It was Tom's bookshelf. You know he has had sickness in the family which has taken all he could rake together, so that he has not had much money to spend for books. And once more invention has been born of necessity. At a

very small expense Tom has built up a set of dope books that are mighty valuable."

"It's this way," said the student. "Tom bought, for only a quarter, a well-bound book containing lists and illustrations of 'approved material' for electric work. The book also contained the code with some explanations and some information on motors and lighting. The picture pages he turned into a scrap book. Whenever he reads anything electrical which seems especially useful, he preserves it in his blue book. Then there is a book on heating and ventilation. Another engineer bought it, but found it was not 'as advertised,' so he offered it to Tom at a bargain. And Tom took it. Inside the front cover is pasted a rather caustic review of the book, pointing out its shortcomings. In fact, every book he has, has one or more reviews pasted in the front part. It is a rather good idea, for these reviews point out the good points in the book and if there are any errors these are likely to be noticed also. Now this book on heating and ventilation was not all bad. It had considerable good material, but there were many illustrations which illustrated nothing in particular, and these have been hidden with dope that from time to time Tom cut from the pages of his engineering papers.

"Boiler manufacturers get out some very valuable trade books, and Tom has made his copies still more valuable and interesting by adding correlated matter clipped from magazines. Then there is a condenser catalog, and a catalog of pipe fittings, and an old book on gas engines which he bought at a second-hand bookstore when he was in the city. And there are others that I do not remember just now. All of them have been well and carefully amended.

"Tables of valuable information, recipes, kinks, explanations of knotty problems, cuts and descriptions of apparatus, all of these things and more are gathered and each placed in its proper volume. And when Tom has occasion to look up some troublesome matter, he knows just where to turn.

"There are, of course, many articles that cannot be put into a scrap book, because they occupy both sides of the sheet. Such matter goes into binders. There is one binder for boilers, one for compressed air, one for pumps, and another for motors, and so on down the list. There is a place for everything and no time is lost hunting up information. The binders cost but very little and they are fast filling up with magazine material which is not only inexpensive, but is up to the minute. This is Tom's built-up library. Don't you think it is a fine idea?"

[Wm. E. Dixon, in National Engineer, Aug. 1915.]

Book Reviews

Child Welfare Work in Pennsylvania. Directed by William H. Slingerland, Special Agent Department of Child-Helping, Russell Sage Foundation, New York. 352 pages. \$1.50.

This is an especially useful and well managed survey of the child-helping agencies and institutions of one of our most populous states. It was compiled in co-operation with the state conferences of charities. The work is divided into five parts, treating, respectively, the general character of the survey, the miscellaneous institutions for children, the child-caring agencies, private institutions for dependents and general and legislative matters. The volume is well supplied with statistical tables, report forms, charts and pictures, a list of institutions and other similar matter. There is also an excellent index.

Production and Thrift. Agricultural War Book, published by direction of Hon. Martin Burrell, Minister of Agriculture, Ottawa, Canada. 250 pages.

This bulletin was prepared and collected for the use of instructors and for the Canadian press, and is designed to set forth by means of statistics the finances of the war in its effect on agriculture. The production of field crops is given in each of the provinces; the probable demands for food supplies to feed the armies of the British Empire; and the possibilities of further production to meet the increased demand. While the statistics were compiled for military purposes, they are of exceptional value and constitute a sort of Domesday Book of the Dominion.

The Marketing of Farm Products. By L. D. H. Weld. The Macmillan Co., New York. 483 pages, \$1.50.

The aim of Dr. Weld's volume is to set forth the fundamental principles of market distribution as applied to the marketing of agricultural products. It designates the place which marketing occupies in the general field of economics; and explains the general organization and methods of marketing, including rural markets and the methods and functions of wholesale dealers. In addition to factors affecting the cost of marketing such as the middleman, cold storage and transportation, such special problems as price quotations, transportation, future trading, inspection and grading, public markets and co-operative marketing are elaborated in separate chapters. The work deals with the problem as it is without any suggestions for improvement. There

is an excellent, well arranged bibliography and the work as a whole is a clear well proportioned contribution to a subject of major importance.

Agricultural Commerce. By Grover G. Huebner. D. Appleton & Co., New York. 406 pages, \$2.00.

Prof. Huebner's work on Agricultural Commerce is designed especially as a textbook for use in colleges and universities and purports to describe the commerce of the United States in agricultural products, with special attention to those phases of trade organization which have to do with the distribution of farm commodities. The chief questions discussed include grain-elevator and warehouse systems, primary and seaboard grain markets, local and central cotton and livestock markets, speculative exchanges, wool, tobacco and fruit markets, crop reports, insurance of agricultural commodities, financing crops, and foreign markets and market influences. The volume is supplied with suggestive maps and statistical tables and a good bibliography is appended to each chapter.

Transportation Rates and Their Regulation. By Harry Gunnison Brown. The Macmillan Co., New York. 347 pages, \$1.50.

The chief purpose of this work is to present a complete theory of transportation rates and their regulations and to illustrate this theory with concrete cases arising in the process of actual regulation. The discussion is confined to a treatment of the more salient problems which emerge in an elucidation of this subject. These subjects include the cost of transportation, competition and monopoly, rate discrimination as between places, commodities and shippers, the development of rate regulation, the rulings of the interstate commerce commission and governmental interference with the business of transportation. The work is an admirable restatement brought to date, of a problem which has engrossed the attention of economists for a quarter of a century.

The Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs. By J. Castell Hopkins, F. S. S., F. R. G. S. The Annual Review Publishing Company Limited. Fifteenth year of issue. 836 pages.

Almost half of this volume is devoted to a discussion of the Great War. The several provinces are then taken up; a section is devoted to a discussion of the more recent political developments in each province and

the several outstanding events are then elaborated. The volume concludes with a discussion of transportation affairs in the Dominion, the chief political events of the Borden administration, financial and other prominent events. The book contains sev-

eral illustrations and an unusually large amount of statistical material. Taken in all its aspects, this volume constitutes an admirable review of the leading developments of Canada and the Canadian provinces during the year 1915.

Bibliographies

Business

The Town Criers Club of St. Paul who were largely responsible for the establishment of the Business Men's Division of the St. Paul Public Library have undertaken to issue in leaflet form a guide to current business literature under the title "Business Books." V. I, nos. 1, 2 and 3, Oct., Nov. and Dec. 1916 have appeared.

Crime and Feeble-Mindedness

L. W. Crafts, Research assistant of the Training School at Vineland, N. J., contributed to the Journal of the American institute of crime and criminology, Nov. 1916, a Bibliography on the relations of crime and feeble-mindedness. p. 544-554.

Eugenics

An extensive Bibliography completes Charles B. Davenport's recent volume on Heredity in relation to Eugenics. p. 273-287. 1915.

Health Insurance

The American labor legislation review for June, 1916, is a Brief for health insurance and includes a Select critical bibliography on health insurance. p. 268-275.

Industrial Surveys

A list of published reports of investigations of industries in New York city, 1905-1916, compiled by Henriette R. Walter has been published jointly by the Committee for vocational scholarships, Henry Street Settlement and the Committee on women's work, Russell Sage Foundation. 21 p. May 1916.

Markets

The City planning board of Boston,

Mass., has issued as the preliminary report of its Market advisory committee, a Summary of the market situation in Boston. The 28 page bibliography which forms part of the Report was compiled by C. C. Williamson, Librarian, Municipal reference library, New York city.

Municipal government

W. B. Munro, Professor of Municipal government, Harvard university has prepared a selected list of fifty books upon municipal government, which has been distributed for criticism and suggestions. 4 p.

Training for public service

The report of the meeting of the Association of urban universities held Nov. 15 and 17, 1915, has been issued by the U. S. Bureau of education as its Bulletin, 1916, no. 30. A bibliography on universities and special training with special reference to the problems, field work and community duties of urban universities, by Hary A. Rider of the Library of research in government, Western Reserve University, occupies 14 pages.

Tuberculosis

The latest bibliography from the Library of the Russell Sage Foundation is on Tuberculosis, the selection and annotations by Dr. P. P. Jacobs of the National association for the study and prevention of tuberculosis 3p. Aug. 1916.

War, European

The New York Times Review of Books has brought up to date its bibliography of literature of the European war, which first appeared in the Spring number, 1916.